



**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSaR)  
FACULTY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING AND MARKETING**

**HARNESSING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC  
RELATIONS PRACTICE: PERSPECTIVES FROM GHANA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication-Institute of Journalism, UniMAC-IJ.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been a cornerstone throughout my academic journey. To my parents for instilling in me the values of perseverance and dedication, and to my friends for their constant motivation and belief in my potential—thank you for being my source of strength.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study explored the awareness, utilization, and barriers to adopting artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in public relations practice. It sought to understand practitioners' awareness of AI, examine its integration into daily activities, and investigate the factors enabling or hindering its adoption. Anchored in Technological Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations theories, the research provided a theoretical lens to examine the interplay between technology and professional practices. Using a qualitative methodology, data was collected through interviews with ten public relations practitioners from diverse professional backgrounds. The findings revealed varying levels of awareness and proficiency in AI, with tools like media monitoring platforms and sentiment analysis software enhancing efficiency. However, barriers such as resource constraints, skill gaps, and ethical concerns were identified as significant challenges. Recommendations emphasized the need for organizational investment in training, infrastructural upgrades, and the development of ethical guidelines to ensure responsible AI integration. The study underscored the transformative potential of AI while advocating for equitable access and professional development to harness its benefits.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Public Relations, Adoption Barriers, Technological Determinism, Professional Development.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AI – Artificial Intelligence

AI-CRM – AI-Driven Customer Relationship Management

4IR – Fourth Industrial Revolution

GenAI – Generative AI

NLP – Natural Language Processing

PR – Public Relations

RBV – Resource-Based Views

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force across various sectors, offering unprecedented capabilities that enhance operational efficiency and decision-making processes (Kaggwa et al., 2024). In public relations (PR), Kumar et al. (2023) underscore that the integration of AI tools presents a significant opportunity to refine strategies that foster more effective communication and stakeholder engagement. The digital landscape has reshaped the way organizations interact with their publics. AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics enable PR professionals to achieve greater insight into public sentiment and media trends. These technologies facilitate the customization of communication strategies to the nuanced preferences of diverse audience segments (James, 2024), thus improving message targeting and the timeliness of engagements.

The literature (Campbell et al., 2020; Ramachandran et al., 2024) reveals that AI-driven analytics tools can significantly improve the identification of key influencers and opinion leaders, which is crucial for effective media planning and campaign management. In this regard, Farhi et al. (2022) illustrate that AI enhances the ability of PR professionals to monitor real-time data and respond proactively to emerging trends and potential crises. Furthermore, automated content generation and the optimization of social media posts are among the AI applications that augment the reach and impact of PR campaigns (Buhmann & White, 2022).

In Ghana, literature (Anani-Bossman, 2023; Andoh-Quainoo & Annor-Antwi, 2015; Nutsugah & Anani-Bossman, 2023) evidences that the digital transformation particularly within the PR sector is still at a nascent stage. However, the growing access to digital technologies and

increasing internet penetration provide a fertile ground for adopting AI in PR practices. The importance of culturally relevant and strategically tailored communication in Ghana underscores the potential of AI to offer insights that are sensitive to local contexts and dynamics. This adaptation can lead to more effective public engagement and the strengthening of trust between organizations and their stakeholders (Blankson & Anani-Bossman, 2023b).

The global evolution of AI in PR practices can be traced back to the early adoption of automation tools designed to streamline basic tasks such as press release distribution and media list management (Panda et al., 2019). Over time, Marr (2019) espouses that these tools have evolved into sophisticated AI systems capable of performing complex analyses and generating insights from vast amounts of data. The advent of machine learning and natural language processing has particularly revolutionized the field (Khan et al., 2023), enabling PR professionals to analyze public sentiment, track media coverage, and predict communication trends with remarkable accuracy (Soegiarto et al., 2024; Zhong, 2024).

In developed countries, AI has been instrumental in enhancing the effectiveness of PR campaigns (Hagelstein et al., 2021; Verhoeven et al., 2018). For instance, Quesenberry (2020) reports of AI-powered tools being used to analyze social media conversations to identify emerging trends and potential crises, allowing PR teams to respond swiftly and appropriately. These tools can also segment audiences based on their behavior and preferences, enabling more personalized and targeted communication strategies (Haleem et al., 2022). This level of sophistication in AI applications has not only improved the efficiency of PR operations but also increased the impact of PR campaigns by ensuring that messages resonate with the intended audiences.

Comparatively, Osei-Mensah et al. (2023) hints of the adoption and impact of AI in PR in Ghana lagging behind those in more digitally advanced countries. This disparity highlights

unique challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, lower levels of digital literacy, and cultural nuances that impact communication practices. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic combination of AI and human insight, tailored to the Ghanaian context (Nutsugah et al., 2024; Nutsugah & Senanu, 2024). Looking ahead, the potential for AI to revolutionize PR in Ghana is immense. Anticipated future trends include more sophisticated AI-driven tools for real-time data analysis, enhanced predictive capabilities for crisis management, and greater personalization of communication strategies. Preparing for these trends involves building digital infrastructure, enhancing AI literacy among PR professionals, and developing ethical frameworks to guide AI use in PR (Nutsugah & Senanu, 2024).

Moreover, the ethical considerations of AI usage in PR cannot be overlooked. Issues related to data privacy, the authenticity of AI-generated content, and the potential for manipulation pose challenges that require careful consideration (Oladoyinbo et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Academic discourse emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that leverages the benefits of AI while addressing ethical concerns through transparent and responsible practices (James, 2024; Swiatek et al., 2022).

The use of AI in PR also raises questions about the future role of PR professionals. As AI takes over routine tasks such as media monitoring and content creation, Bourne (2019) accentuates that PR practitioners can focus on more strategic activities such as relationship building and reputation management. This shift could lead to a more strategic and proactive approach to PR as Türksoy (2022) asserts. Consequently, Kretschmer and Winkler (2024) forecasts that PR professionals could now be better equipped to anticipate and respond to issues before they escalate.

Essentially, the integration of AI in PR offers significant advantages for enhancing communication strategies and operational effectiveness. This study will explore the specific

applications and benefits of AI in the PR sector in Ghana, contributing to a deeper understanding of how digital innovations can be harnessed in developing economies. Through this exploration, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the effective integration of technology in PR, ensuring that its implementation respects ethical boundaries and promotes sustainable practices. While the digital transformation of the PR sector in Ghana is still in its early stages, the potential benefits of AI are vast. By leveraging AI technologies, PR professionals in Ghana can enhance their communication strategies, improve audience engagement, and strengthen their relationships with stakeholders. However, this transformation must be approached with a careful consideration of ethical implications and a commitment to building the necessary digital infrastructure and skills.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The integration of AI into PR marks a significant transformation in communication strategies (Blankson & Anani-Bossman, 2023a). The current state of AI in PR not only highlights the transformative potential of these technologies but also calls attention to the pressing need for PR professionals to advance their understanding of AI. Despite rapid technological advancements, Osei-Mensah et al. (2023) lament that there is a notable deficiency in academic research exploring AI adoption and understanding among PR professionals, particularly in Ghana. This gap underscores the urgent need for comprehensive studies that investigate the practical applications and implications of AI in PR.

As affirmed by Zerfass et al. (2020), AI has the potential to revolutionize PR by enhancing campaign workflows, from audience profiling to content distribution. However, many professionals lack a deep understanding of AI's capabilities, posing significant challenges to its adoption at both individual and organizational levels. This limited understanding hinders the effective integration of AI tools such as predictive analytics and automated content

management systems, which could significantly improve audience engagement through precise targeting and message personalization.

Additionally, cultural and contextual differences must be considered. There has been several scholarly debates on how PR is practiced in different countries and the theories that inform such practices (Labarca & Ampuero Ruiz, 2021; Verčič & Sriramesh, 2019), evidence shows that literature on the development and practice of PR is virtually uneven. Essentially, what works in Western contexts may not be effective in other parts of the world due to varying cultural norms and communication practices as accentuated by Verčič et al. (2015). These differences could impact the adoption and effectiveness of AI in PR practices. On this premise, there is a clear need for a strategic combination of AI and human insight to fully harness AI's potential in PR. Consequently, comprehensive studies are essential to address these challenges and to explore how AI can be effectively integrated into PR practices in Ghana, considering cultural and contextual differences. This study is therefore not merely beneficial but essential for the future readiness of the profession. Addressing the knowledge gaps and enhancing the AI competency of PR professionals equips them to lead in a technologically advanced communications environment.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To explore the awareness and understanding of AI technologies among practitioners
2. To examine how practitioners utilize AI in their daily activities
3. To investigate the barriers and facilitators to AI adoption in PR practices

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What is the current level of awareness and understanding of AI technologies among PR practitioners?
2. How do practitioners utilize AI in their daily activities?

3. What are the perceived barriers and facilitators to AI adoption in PR practices?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study rests on its potential to advance both theoretical and practical understandings of AI integration in PR within the unique context of Ghana. By exploring how AI is harnessed for effective PR practice, this research addresses a critical gap in the existing literature and contributes valuable insights to the academic community. From a policy perspective, the findings inform policymakers about the necessary frameworks and regulations that support AI adoption in the PR industry. This creates an environment conducive to innovation and technological advancement.

Practically, PR professionals in Ghana benefit from evidence-based recommendations on integrating AI into their workflows. This enhances their efficiency and effectiveness, enabling them to engage better with their audiences through precise targeting and personalized messaging. Organizations gain clarity on the competencies required for successful AI adoption, helping them allocate resources and training more effectively.

The study's stakeholders include PR practitioners, policymakers, academic researchers, and organizations within Ghana. Each benefits from the insights and recommendations provided, driving forward the adoption and effective use of AI in PR. Moreover, this research lays the groundwork for future studies, prompting further exploration into AI's role in PR across different cultural and contextual settings. It opens new avenues for research, encouraging scholars to examine the implications of AI in diverse environments.

### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The research is organized into five distinct chapters to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of the study's scope and outcomes. The introductory chapter sets the stage by presenting the study's background, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, and

structure. Chapter two explores the theoretical foundations and includes a thorough review of relevant literature. Chapter three outlines the methodological framework, detailing the research design, sample selection, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data gathering procedures, and methods of data analysis. Chapter four is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the study's findings. The final chapter, chapter five, summarizes and concludes the study's outcomes and offers recommendations for future research in the field.

### **1.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter established the foundation for the study by providing background information and defining the gap the study aims to bridge. It outlined the study's scope, objectives, and significance. The chapter emphasized the critical role of PR in enhancing AI adoption in Ghana, focusing on how cultural and contextual differences impact this process. It justified the need for the study and outlined its potential contributions to academic knowledge, policy-making, practical applications, stakeholder benefits, and future research directions.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks into the existing body of knowledge related to the integration of AI in PR. The review begins with an exploration of the theoretical frameworks that inform the study, establishing a foundation for understanding the implications of AI in this field. The chapter proceeds to examine the global and local contexts of AI adoption in PR, identifying key trends, applications, and challenges. Through a critical analysis of relevant literature, the chapter highlights the benefits and limitations of AI in enhancing PR practices. The aim is to contextualize AI's role within the broader landscape of PR, with particular attention to the unique dynamics in Ghana.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.2.1 Technological Determinism**

Technological Determinism emerged as a significant theoretical perspective in understanding the relationship between technology and society. The theory's roots can be traced to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with prominent figures such as Thorstein Veblen and Karl Marx laying the groundwork. Veblen emphasized the impact of industrial technology on social structures (Veblen, 1904), while Marx's materialist conception of history underscored the role of technological advancements in shaping societal changes (Marx, 1867). The theory gained further traction with the works of Marshall McLuhan in the mid-20th century, who famously posited that "the medium is the message," highlighting how communication technologies alter human perceptions and interactions (McLuhan, 1964).

The major contributions of Technological Determinism lie in its ability to explain the far-reaching effects of technology on various aspects of life. It suggests that technological

innovations drive social, cultural, and economic transformations, often in a linear and unidirectional manner. McLuhan's work, along with that of Veblen and Marx, emphasized that technological progress determines the development of social structures and cultural values, rather than being shaped by them (Smith & Marx, 1994). This perspective has been instrumental in examining the pervasive influence of media technologies on modern societies, from the printing press to the internet.

At its core, Technological Determinism posits that technology is the primary driver of societal change, often leaving little room for human agency or social factors to influence technological development. The theory suggests a cause-and-effect relationship where technology dictates the direction of societal evolution. This deterministic view implies that societies must adapt to technological advancements, often at the expense of traditional cultural and social norms. The theory's scope extends to various domains, including media studies, communication, and sociology, offering a framework to analyze the implications of technological advancements on human life (Chandler, 1995).

Technological Determinism, despite its historical significance, has been critiqued for its reductionist approach. One of the primary strengths of the theory lies in its ability to highlight the transformative power of technology on societal structures. It offers a compelling explanation for the pervasive influence of technological advancements, especially in the context of media and communication. However, its deterministic nature, which often overlooks the role of human agency and social factors, is a significant limitation (Bimber, 1990). Critics argue that it oversimplifies the complex interactions between technology and society, leading to a one-dimensional view that fails to account for the reciprocal relationship between the two.

### **2.2.2 Diffusion of Innovations Theory**

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, formulated by Everett Rogers in 1962, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how innovations spread within a society. The origins of this theory can be linked to earlier studies in anthropology and rural sociology, which examined the adoption of agricultural practices (Rogers, 1962). Rogers synthesized these ideas into a cohesive theory, emphasizing the social processes that govern the adoption and diffusion of new technologies or ideas.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory has made significant contributions to understanding how innovations are adopted over time by different segments of a population. Rogers introduced key concepts such as the innovation-decision process, the roles of opinion leaders and change agents, and the categorization of adopters into innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 2003). These contributions have been crucial in analyzing the factors that influence the rate of adoption and the eventual saturation of innovations within a society.

The theory's key concepts revolve around the diffusion process, which includes innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system. The theory examines how new ideas or technologies are communicated through specific channels over time and within particular social contexts. Unlike Technological Determinism, this theory recognizes the role of human agency, social networks, and cultural factors in influencing the adoption process. The purpose of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory is to provide a detailed understanding of how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread through cultures, offering valuable insights for fields such as marketing, public health, and education (Greenhalgh et al., 2004).

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, on the other hand, is lauded for its comprehensive approach to understanding the spread of innovations. Its strengths include the emphasis on the

social nature of innovation adoption, recognizing the importance of human agency, social networks, and cultural factors. The theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing the factors that influence the adoption process, making it widely applicable across various disciplines. However, the theory has limitations, including its reliance on a linear model of diffusion, which may not always capture the complexities of real-world adoption processes. Additionally, the categorization of adopters has been critiqued for being too rigid and not accounting for the fluidity of social identities and behaviors (Rogers, 2003; Dearing, 2009).

### **2.2.3 Relevance to Theories**

The study is anchored by Technological Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations Theory, both of which offer critical insights into the adoption and impact of AI in PR. Technological Determinism asserts that technology is a driving force behind societal and organizational change, shaping how industries evolve. In PR, AI is not just a tool but a transformative force that redefines communication strategies and stakeholder engagement. This perspective aligns with the study's objective of exploring how AI is reshaping PR practices in Ghana, emphasizing the need to understand the broader implications of technological advancements.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory complements this by focusing on the process through which AI technologies are adopted within the PR industry. It provides a framework for analyzing how PR professionals in Ghana perceive and integrate AI into their work. The theory addresses factors such as the rate of adoption, the role of early adopters, and the perceived advantages of AI. This is directly linked to the study's objectives of examining practitioners' awareness and understanding of AI, as well as identifying barriers and facilitators to its adoption. By considering the stages of adoption and the social dynamics involved, the theory helps explain the variability in how AI is utilized across different organizations.

Together, these theories offer a comprehensive lens through which to examine the integration of AI in PR. While Technological Determinism emphasizes the overarching influence of technology, Diffusion of Innovations provides a detailed view of the adoption process. This dual perspective is crucial for understanding both the macro-level impact of AI on the industry and the micro-level challenges faced by PR professionals in Ghana. These complementary theories underpin the study by providing a robust framework to explore the intersection of technology and human agency in the evolving field of PR.

### **2.3 Definition of Public Relations**

Public relations (PR) is commonly understood as the strategic communication process that builds and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Tench and Yeomans (2017) define PR as a discipline that seeks to influence public opinion and behavior by building relationships and managing perceptions. In practice, PR involves crafting and disseminating information to shape public discourse, manage crises, and enhance organizational visibility (Wilcox et al., 2015). PR professionals now engage with a diverse range of platforms and stakeholders, requiring adaptability and a strategic approach to relationship management. Bourne (2019) highlighted that PR's professional habitus is shaped by futurity and optimism, especially in the corporate context. The field has shifted to emphasize transparency, ethical communication, and accountability, as organizations are increasingly held to higher standards (Blankson & Anani-Bossman, 2023a). The relational aspect emphasizes dialogue and interaction with various publics, including customers, employees, and the community (Botan & Hazleton, 2010). PR contributes to reputation management, influencing how organizations are perceived by both internal and external stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2007).

## **2.4 Concept of Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Russell & Norvig, 2016). AI encompasses a broad range of technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, and robotics (Goodfellow et al., 2016). AI systems process vast amounts of data, enabling them to recognize patterns, make decisions, and improve performance over time (Jordan & Mitchell, 2015). Bostrom (2016) for instance distinguishes between narrow AI, designed for specific tasks, and general AI, which aims to replicate human cognitive functions. While AI has transformative potential in fields such as healthcare, finance, and autonomous systems, ethical considerations around privacy, bias, and accountability persist (Floridi et al., 2018). The continuous advancements in AI have raised questions about the future of work and societal impacts (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). As AI evolves, its applications are becoming increasingly integrated into daily life, enhancing efficiency and decision-making across multiple sectors (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019).

## **2.5 Artificial Intelligence and Public Relations Management**

The integration of AI into PR has evolved gradually but decisively, marking a transformative shift in the way communication strategies are designed and implemented (Adi, 2023). During the early stages of AI development in the mid-20th century, its influence was largely confined to research laboratories, with minimal application in commercial or creative sectors like PR (Russell & Norvig, 2016). However, the rapid technological advances of the late 1990s and early 2000s introduced algorithm-driven processes to marketing and communication, signifying the beginning of AI's infiltration into PR practices.

One of the earliest forms of AI adoption in PR can be traced to the use of automated messaging systems and chatbots, which began emerging in the 1990s. These systems allowed businesses to automate customer interactions, a function that has since grown more sophisticated with the

introduction of machine learning models capable of generating personalized responses (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2017). As the capabilities of AI systems improved, PR professionals began incorporating AI-powered tools into media monitoring, trend analysis, and reputation management (DiStaso & Bortree, 2014). By 2010, AI had found its footing in data-driven PR strategies, offering real-time analytics and predictive insights that optimized campaign management.

In Ghana, the integration of AI into PR has progressed at a slower pace, primarily due to access limitations and infrastructural challenges (Anani-Bossman et al., 2024). Up until the mid-2010s, the PR industry in Ghana largely depended on manual methods. However, as digital technologies became more accessible, Brobbey et al. (2021) affirms an increasing number of PR firms in the country began experimenting with AI-driven tools. For instance, some firms have adopted AI for social media analytics and sentiment analysis, which mirrors a broader trend in developing nations. This development illustrates the potential of AI to enhance communication strategies and bridge gaps even in resource-constrained settings.

### **2.5.1 Current Trends of AI in PR**

The present landscape of AI in PR reveals an industry at the intersection of human creativity and machine intelligence (Adi, 2023), with AI playing an increasingly vital role in shaping communication strategies. Modern AI tools such as natural language processing (NLP), machine learning algorithms, and predictive analytics are now indispensable for PR professionals. These tools analyze large datasets to detect emerging trends, gauge public sentiment, and optimize engagement strategies in real time (Seidenglanz & Baier, 2023). As organizations seek to cultivate deeper connections with their audiences, AI enables more precise audience segmentation, tailoring messages to specific demographic and psychographic profiles. Consequently, AI amplifies the reach and effectiveness of PR campaigns by ensuring that the right message is delivered at the right time to the right audience.

One prominent trend in AI-powered PR is the increasing reliance on sentiment analysis, which uses machine learning to interpret and classify the emotional tone behind texts such as social media posts or news articles (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Sentiment analysis allows PR teams to monitor brand perception continuously and adjust messaging in response to shifts in public sentiment. This dynamic feedback loop provides PR professionals with actionable insights, enabling more agile responses to crises and opportunities. Another key development is the rise of automated content creation tools, such as AI-powered writing assistants, which help generate press releases, blog posts, and social media content. While these tools are still in their infancy, they show significant promise in streamlining content production, reducing human effort while maintaining a level of quality and coherence in messaging (Alqurashi et al., 2023).

At the core of this transformation, Maldonado (2020) argues lies the development of AI-driven media monitoring platforms. These platforms track thousands of news outlets, blogs, and social media channels, offering real-time data on how brands and issues are being discussed across multiple mediums (Diakopoulos, 2019). Such tools allow PR practitioners to assess the impact of their campaigns, identify potential risks, and seize emerging opportunities swiftly. In this regard, AI is not merely a tool but a force that is reshaping the contours of PR practice, influencing both strategy and execution.

### **2.5.2 Global vs. Local Context**

The use of AI in PR exhibits substantial variability when comparing developed and developing regions. In developed countries, AI-driven PR tools have become deeply embedded within communication infrastructures. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan are at the forefront of AI adoption in PR, utilizing advanced machine learning algorithms, NLP, and predictive analytics to manage large-scale communication efforts (Boyd & Crawford, 2012). For example, global PR firms rely on AI for media outreach, audience targeting, and automated customer service systems, enabling them to handle vast quantities of data efficiently.

AI-powered PR platforms (such as Jasper, Intelligent Relations (Preston) and Brandwatch), widely used in these countries, have fundamentally altered the relationship between brands and audiences by providing more sophisticated insights into audience behavior and sentiment (Çerçi, 2024).

In contrast, the penetration of AI in PR within developing countries remains uneven, with significant disparities in infrastructure and access. In some African countries, like Nigeria, Ade-Ibijola and Okonkwo (2023) points out that the cost of AI technology and the need for specialized skills hinder widespread adoption. AI tools are typically accessible to larger, multinational corporations rather than smaller, local PR firms. However, this dynamic is gradually changing as digital infrastructure improves across the continent. In Ghana, although there has been some progress in digital infrastructure, including the growth of mobile internet usage, the adoption of AI-driven tools in PR, such as social media analytics and automated content generation, remains limited. This is primarily due to infrastructural challenges and a lack of deep understanding and familiarity with AI technologies among PR professionals. Consequently, traditional methods continue to be predominant in the PR landscape, despite the potential for digital tools to enhance communication strategies (Anani-Bossman et al., 2024; Gopaldas, 2021; International Telecommunication Union, 2021).

Interestingly, despite the challenges of AI adoption in developing countries, there are significant opportunities for localized AI applications. Nutsugah and Senanu (2024) gives indication that Ghanaian PR practitioners are beginning to leverage AI for localized content, harnessing its potential to engage with culturally specific narratives that resonate more deeply with local audiences. Moreover, AI can play a critical role in addressing some of the most pressing communication challenges in developing countries, such as misinformation and language diversity. For example, AI-driven language translation tools can help bridge the gap between global brands and local communities, ensuring that messages are not lost in translation

(Gondwe, 2023). Such tools also enhance accessibility, allowing PR campaigns to reach non-English-speaking audiences more effectively.

Thus, the comparison between the global and local contexts underscores the transformative potential of AI in PR. While AI integration in developed countries has already matured, developing nations like Ghana are experiencing a more gradual but promising adoption trajectory. As infrastructure improves and AI technologies become more accessible, the role of AI in PR within these regions is likely to expand further, driving a shift toward more data-driven and strategic communication practices.

## **2.6 Opportunities of AI in PR**

The integration of AI into PR offers substantial benefits by significantly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of PR campaigns. AI technologies streamline various aspects of PR, ranging from content creation to audience analysis, which allows for faster and more accurate execution of campaigns. This increased efficiency not only saves time but also reduces the resources required for campaign development, enabling PR professionals to concentrate on more strategic tasks. For example, AI-driven tools like natural language processing can generate press releases and social media posts that are tailored to specific audiences, further enhancing the quality of communication (Wu et al., 2022). Moreover, the ability of AI to process and analyze large datasets enhances the precision of PR strategies, leading to more effective outcomes (Johnston & Glenny, 2020).

In addition to improving efficiency, AI significantly enhances the effectiveness of PR campaigns by facilitating data-driven decision-making. AI tools can analyze audience behavior, media trends, and competitor activities, providing valuable insights that inform campaign strategies. For instance, machine learning algorithms can identify patterns in consumer sentiment, allowing PR professionals to craft messages that resonate more

effectively with target audiences (Huang & Rust, 2018). The data-driven approach enabled by AI ensures that campaign strategies are grounded in real-time data, which increases the likelihood of success. Furthermore, AI's ability to monitor and adjust campaigns in real-time contributes to their effectiveness, as these tools offer continuous feedback on campaign performance, enabling timely adjustments to strategies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

Finally, the adoption of AI in PR is not without its challenges, but the potential benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Concerns such as data privacy, the need for human oversight, and the ethical implications of AI-driven content creation are valid considerations that must be addressed as AI continues to evolve in the PR industry (Floridi et al., 2018). However, when these challenges are managed effectively, AI can become a powerful tool that amplifies the reach and impact of PR campaigns. As the technology advances, the role of AI in PR is expected to grow, offering even more sophisticated tools for audience engagement, sentiment analysis, and personalized communication (Schoenherr, 2022). By embracing AI, PR professionals can not only improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their campaigns but also stay ahead of industry trends, ensuring their strategies remain relevant and impactful.

## **2.7 Challenges of AI Adoption in PR**

The adoption of AI in PR faces substantial technological barriers that impact its effectiveness, particularly in regions with developing digital infrastructure. Inadequate data processing capabilities and unreliable internet connectivity can significantly hinder AI's potential in enhancing PR practices, leading to inefficiencies in communication strategies (Panda et al., 2019). Additionally, a notable challenge lies in AI literacy among PR professionals. The rapid pace of AI development often surpasses the ability of these professionals to keep up, resulting in underutilization of AI technologies and a reliance on outdated methods. This gap underscores the need for continuous education and training to ensure AI tools are effectively integrated into PR strategies (Bourne, 2019).

Cultural and contextual factors further complicate the adoption of AI in PR. For example, in regions like Ghana, cultural perceptions and socio-economic conditions shape the reception and implementation of AI tools. Füller et al. (2022) further asserts that skepticism or resistance due to fears about job displacement or a lack of understanding and this can create significant barriers to AI integration in PR practices. Moreover, the regulatory landscape, particularly in terms of data protection laws, plays a crucial role in either facilitating or constraining AI adoption. These factors demand a tailored approach that considers the specific needs and challenges of different regions to ensure successful AI integration in PR (Amoah, 2024).

Ethical considerations are paramount in the adoption of AI in PR, particularly regarding data privacy and the authenticity of AI-generated content. The use of AI for data mining to personalize communication poses significant risks if privacy regulations are not strictly followed, potentially leading to data misuse and loss of public trust (Oladoyinbo et al., 2024). Additionally, the ability of AI to create human-like content raises concerns about deception and misinformation, emphasizing the need for transparency and ethical responsibility in PR practices. As AI continues to evolve, it is crucial that PR professionals adhere to a strong ethical framework to avoid misuse and maintain societal trust (Rees, 2020; Nair, 2020).

## **2.8 Gaps in the Literature**

While the adoption of AI in PR has gained considerable attention in recent years, significant gaps persist within the existing literature, particularly in the context of developing countries such as Ghana. Much of the research has predominantly focused on AI's integration within developed nations, where digital infrastructure and technological literacy are more advanced (Zerfass et al., 2020). However, studies on how AI is being adopted and utilized within the unique socio-cultural and economic landscapes of developing nations remain scarce. This omission presents a critical gap, as the dynamics influencing AI adoption in these contexts differ markedly from those in more technologically advanced regions. These differences

necessitate a closer examination of the factors that affect the adoption of AI in PR in countries like Ghana, where challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, varying levels of technological literacy, and cultural influences play a significant role in shaping AI integration (Anani-Bossman, 2023).

Furthermore, the existing literature often fails to address the role of cultural and contextual factors in the adoption of AI in PR practices. Much of the current research operates under the assumption that strategies effective in Western contexts are universally applicable (Verčič & Sriramesh, 2019). However, this perspective overlooks the unique communication practices and cultural values that influence PR in non-Western societies. In Ghana, where communication strategies are deeply embedded in cultural practices, there is a significant gap in understanding how AI can be effectively integrated into PR while respecting and leveraging these cultural nuances. Addressing this gap requires localized research that considers the specific cultural, social, and economic conditions that affect AI adoption in Ghana. Such research is vital for developing AI strategies that are not only technologically sound but also culturally resonant and contextually appropriate (Blankson & Anani-Bossman, 2023).

The identified gaps underscore the necessity for a study that specifically explores AI adoption in Ghana's PR industry. While existing research provides valuable insights into the general benefits and challenges of AI in PR, it often lacks the depth and specificity needed to address the unique conditions present in Ghana. This gap justifies the need for focused, localized research that examines how PR professionals in Ghana understand, adopt, and utilize AI in their daily practices. By addressing these gaps, the study will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of AI in PR, offering insights that are both globally relevant and locally applicable (Nutsugah & Senanu, 2024). Such research is essential not only for advancing academic knowledge but also for informing practical strategies that enhance the effectiveness of PR in Ghana's rapidly evolving digital landscape.

## **2.9 Empirical Review**

The existing body of empirical literature on AI within the field of PR and communication management in Africa has been sparse despite its transformative potential for industries worldwide. Anani-Bossman et al. (2024) addressed this gap by exploring the understanding, adoption, and effects of AI among communication professionals in Ghana. This study employed a quantitative methodology, gathering data from 275 professionals and revealed significant insights. Although the respondents exhibited some familiarity with AI, the findings indicated a limited depth of understanding regarding its functionality and potential. Professionals believed AI would significantly influence their work and the communication field overall. However, the study also highlighted that these professionals did not anticipate notable challenges, such as job losses or the need for upskilling, pointing to a gap in their perception of the risks associated with AI. The research emphasized the necessity for increased education and discourse surrounding AI's integration in the PR industry, both in Ghana and across the broader African context.

Further, Tenderich (2019) observed that the expansion of social media and multimedia development tools had significantly broadened the scope of PR content creation. The study noted that a key mistake in PR involved the separation of content creation from publication strategies. Through the example of Megabots' Kickstarter campaign in 2015, it was demonstrated that effective PR content must be designed for high shareability, with storytelling as the primary focus. This shift toward multimedia content creation marked a significant departure from traditional written formats like press releases and media pitches, signaling an exciting new era for PR professionals.

Building on this, Tischendorf and Brinkmann (2024) explored the integration of AI in digital marketing, focusing on how AI-generated content influenced consumer behavior. By examining the effects of AI-generated advertisements on purchase intentions and perceptions

of credibility, the study revealed that AI-generated content performed comparably to human-generated content in terms of purchase intent. Furthermore, it showed that AI-generated humans were perceived as more credible than their real-life counterparts. These findings suggested that AI-generated content could be effectively integrated into digital marketing strategies without negatively affecting consumer behavior. This research offered a fresh perspective on AI's potential in content creation and advertising, providing marketers with valuable insights as they adapted to evolving consumer preferences.

Chatterjee et al. (2021) provided additional insight by examining how AI-driven customer relationship management (AI-CRM) impacts business-to-business (B2B) relationships. This research utilized institutional theory and resource-based views (RBV) to investigate the ways AI-CRM could affect organizational performance across varying firm sizes, ages, and industries. Their findings demonstrated that the shift from traditional relationship management to AI-CRM was a gradual but foundational transformation. Through automating decision-making processes, AI-CRM redefined the strategic activity of relationship management within organizations. The study further suggested that the proper implementation of AI systems was crucial to achieving success in these transformations. By linking the findings to institutional change processes, the study underscored the critical role AI plays in influencing organizational dynamics, offering further context to the conversation surrounding AI's adoption in PR.

In a similar vein, Nutsugah and Senanu (2024) conducted an expansive continent-wide investigation into the use and implications of Generative AI (GenAI) in PR practices across Africa. Their qualitative research provided valuable insights into how PR professionals in various regions were engaging with GenAI technologies. The study identified both the opportunities and threats posed by these technologies, including practical, socio-cultural, and ethical considerations. A key finding from this research was the lack of established ethical policies governing the use of GenAI in PR, raising concerns about the profession's ability to

remain transparent and accountable. The study emphasized the pressing need for regulatory frameworks to be established, further contributing to the discourse on AI's impact in the industry.

The discussion on the future of PR in Africa was extended by Blankson and Anani-Bossman (2023b), who examined the continent's evolving PR landscape. The article argued that despite ongoing challenges, the future of PR in Africa appeared promising, driven by the continent's rapid technological and societal development. The authors highlighted the need for an African-specific PR framework, pointing out the inadequacy of Western theoretical models in the African context. The call for a framework rooted in African philosophies, while remaining cognizant of global changes, underscored the importance of contextualized scholarship in PR. This insight added depth to the understanding of PR's future in Africa and the responsibilities of scholars and practitioners in shaping it.

Bourne (2019) presented a critical view of PR's relationship with neoliberalism, focusing on how the profession supported AI's rise within neoliberal capitalist structures. The study argued that PR, driven by a professional habitus rooted in optimism and futurity, played a crucial role in promoting AI as a public good. It further noted that PR practitioners often overlooked the broader societal implications of their work, particularly the inequalities perpetuated by AI. This critique added a layer of complexity to the discussion, as it positioned PR within broader political and economic frameworks, revealing the ideological influences shaping the profession.

Buhmann and White (2022) extended the conversation by discussing the broader implications of AI across various sectors, with specific attention to PR. Their research traced the evolution of AI from its origins in the 1950s to its present-day applications, highlighting the growing prevalence of machine-learning algorithms and their ability to automate decisions and

processes traditionally carried out by human actors. The study indicated that AI is now integrated into daily life, from search engines to customer service systems, and has begun to transform the PR industry. It noted that AI had not only altered how communication tasks are performed but had also shifted the profession's focus toward relationship management and social responsibility. These findings highlighted how AI's growing role in PR aligns with broader shifts in the field, complementing the work of other scholars in underscoring the importance of AI literacy among professionals.

Finally, Blankson and Anani-Bossman (2023a) explored the implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), specifically AI's impact on PR practice in Africa. The article highlighted the transformative potential of AI tools, which allowed PR professionals to strengthen relationships, monitor their environment more effectively, and improve communication strategies. Despite the global adoption of AI in PR, the article identified a significant knowledge gap in Africa, stressing the importance of initiating scholarly and professional conversations on AI's role in the continent's PR industry. The article concluded with practical suggestions for African PR practitioners, advocating for the strategic adoption of AI to benefit both organizations and the continent as a whole.

Taken together, the reviewed studies offer a cohesive view of AI's growing influence on the PR and communication industries. They collectively emphasize the need for both industry professionals and scholars to engage more deeply with AI technologies, address potential challenges, and develop ethical frameworks to guide future applications. This body of research suggests that while AI presents numerous opportunities for enhancing efficiency and decision-making, it also introduces complex challenges that require thoughtful consideration and proactive planning.

## **2.10 Chapter Summary**

The chapter provided a comprehensive review of literature related to AI in PR. It established the theoretical foundation, offering insights into the relevance of key communication and technology theories to the study. The chapter analyzed global and local trends in AI adoption, focusing on how these developments influence PR practices. It also discussed the benefits AI offers, such as improved efficiency and audience engagement, while addressing the significant challenges, including technological barriers and ethical concerns. The review identified gaps in the current literature, justifying the need for further research, particularly within the context of Ghanaian PR.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for this study, focusing on the research approach, data collection methods, and sampling techniques used in the investigation. The primary data collection tool is semi-structured interviews, designed to capture detailed insights from PR professionals across different sectors. The chapter also discusses ethical considerations and the study's limitations, ensuring that the research methodology aligns with the study's objectives while maintaining academic rigor and integrity.

#### **3.2 Research Method**

The research method selected for this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is a methodology that focuses on understanding the subjective experiences, behaviors, and interpretations of individuals, as opposed to quantitative research, which emphasizes measurable data and statistical analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for studies that seek to explore complex phenomena such as technology adoption, where human factors like perceptions, motivations, and cultural influences play significant roles (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). As noted by Patton (2015), qualitative research is well-suited to studies where flexibility and depth of exploration are required, allowing the researcher to adapt the study as new themes emerge during the data collection process.

In the context of this study, the qualitative method is ideal because it allows for a deeper investigation into how PR professionals in Ghana perceive and adopt AI technologies. AI integration in PR is a multifaceted issue, influenced by a range of factors including organizational culture, technological infrastructure, and the unique demands of different

sectors (Gibbs, 2018). Qualitative research enables the exploration of these dynamics by focusing on the subjective experiences and attitudes of PR professionals, thereby providing insights that could not be captured through quantitative measures. This method allows the study to go beyond mere statistics and explore the “why” and “how” behind AI adoption, aligning with the exploratory nature of the research (Tracy, 2019).

### **3.3 Research Design**

The research design employed in this study is a case study approach. A case study is a research strategy that investigates a particular phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not immediately clear (Yin, 2018). Case studies are commonly used in social science research when the goal is to understand complex, real-world issues and generate insights that are deeply embedded in specific contexts (Stake, 1995). This method is particularly effective for answering “how” and “why” questions, making it ideal for this study’s exploration of how PR professionals adopt AI and why certain barriers and facilitators exist in this process.

The use of a case study design is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of AI adoption across different sectors in Ghana. Unlike survey-based research or experiments, case studies provide the flexibility to investigate both broad trends and specific, localized factors that influence the phenomenon under study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this context, the case study design enables the researcher to examine how AI adoption is shaped by Ghana’s unique technological landscape, cultural influences, and organizational structures within the PR industry. Furthermore, case studies allow for the use of multiple data sources—such as interviews, observations, and documents—which can be triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI integration (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This approach ensures that the study captures both the depth and breadth of AI adoption, providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing PR professionals in Ghana.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The concept of study population denotes the group of individuals from which data is collected in order to address the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). A well-defined study population enables researchers to target the most relevant participants, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings (Bryman, 2016). For this study, the population consists of PR professionals across different sectors in Ghana, including public, private, and non-governmental organizations. This population is critical because it represents a diverse range of experiences, roles, and responsibilities within the PR industry, providing a comprehensive view of AI adoption.

### **3.5 Sampling**

Sampling has to do with the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population to participate in a research study (Patton, 2015). In qualitative research, sampling is often non-random, allowing the researcher to focus on individuals who can provide the most relevant insights. Non-probability sampling methods, such as purposive sampling, are particularly useful when the research aims to explore specific phenomena in-depth, as opposed to generalizing findings to a broader population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Purposive sampling involves the intentional selection of participants based on predefined criteria that align with the research objectives, ensuring that those chosen have the necessary experience or knowledge to provide rich, detailed data (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, purposive sampling was employed to select PR professionals who are actively involved in the adoption and use of AI in their work across different sectors, rather than being limited to agency professionals. This approach allows the researcher to target individuals who are directly engaged with AI technologies, ensuring that the data collected is both relevant and insightful. A sample size of twelve (12) PR professionals was selected, with each participant chosen based on their experience and familiarity with AI tools in PR, ensuring they could

provide detailed perspectives on how AI is integrated into their workflows. The decision to use a relatively small sample size is informed by the qualitative nature of the research, where depth of insight is prioritized over breadth. Mason (2010) emphasizes that for qualitative studies, a smaller number of participants is often sufficient to capture a range of perspectives, particularly when the aim is to gain detailed, context-specific insights.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instrument**

Data collection instruments refer to the tools or methods used to gather information from participants in a research study. In qualitative research, interviews are a common data collection instrument, providing a flexible and open-ended approach to exploring participants' experiences and perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interviews can vary in structure, ranging from highly structured to unstructured formats, depending on the goals of the research. Semi-structured interviews, which balance both predetermined questions and the freedom to explore new topics as they arise, are particularly effective for studies that aim to gather in-depth qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection instrument to explore how PR professionals perceive and adopt AI in their practices. Semi-structured interviews allow for a structured exploration of key themes, such as how AI is used in PR and the challenges faced during its implementation, while also offering participants the opportunity to introduce new topics that may be relevant to the research (Kallio et al., 2016). The interviews were conducted both face-to-face and through video calls, depending on the availability and convenience of the participants. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and one hour, providing ample time to delve into the participants' experiences and gather rich, detailed data. This method also allowed for follow-up questions, where necessary, to clarify responses or explore specific areas of interest in greater depth (Brinkmann, 2014). The interviews were

recorded with the participants' consent, ensuring accuracy in transcription and subsequent analysis.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research involves the systematic examination of data to identify patterns, themes, and insights that address the research questions. One of the most widely used methods for analyzing qualitative data is thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for studies that aim to understand how individuals perceive and experience specific phenomena, as it allows the researcher to capture both explicit and implicit meanings in the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). The process typically involves several stages, beginning with familiarization with the data, followed by coding, theme development, and refinement of those themes (Nowell et al., 2017).

For this study, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The first step involved transcribing all interviews verbatim to ensure that no details were missed, allowing the researchers to capture both verbal and non-verbal cues that could influence the meaning of participants' responses (Clarke et al., 2015). The next stage involved familiarizing with the data by reading through the transcripts multiple times, which helped the researchers to immerse themselves in the content and begin to identify key patterns and insights. Coding followed, with the researchers systematically identifying and highlighting significant phrases, sentences, or ideas related to AI adoption in PR. This process was done inductively, meaning that the codes emerged organically from the data rather than being predefined (Nowell et al., 2017).

Once the initial coding was complete, the researchers began organizing the codes into broader themes that captured the main patterns in the data, such as common challenges in AI adoption,

varying attitudes toward AI, or differences in the ways PR professionals from different sectors use AI tools. These themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data, with overlapping themes being merged and sub-themes created where necessary to provide a more detailed understanding of the issues (Clarke & Braun, 2018). The final themes were then analyzed in relation to the research questions and existing literature, ensuring that the study's conclusions were both contextually relevant and theoretically informed. Thematic analysis, in this case, allowed for a nuanced interpretation of the data, capturing both the commonalities and divergences in how PR professionals perceive and adopt AI technologies (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

### **3.8 Ensuring Trustworthiness**

Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is crucial for validating the accuracy and credibility of the findings. This study followed the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to enhance trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement with the data, member checking, and triangulation of multiple data sources to ensure that the findings accurately reflect participants' experiences. Transferability was addressed by providing a detailed description of the research context and participants, enabling readers to determine if the findings are applicable to other settings. Dependability was ensured through the use of a clear, systematic process of data collection and analysis, which can be replicated by other researchers. Lastly, confirmability was upheld by maintaining an audit trail, where all decisions, interpretations, and analyses were documented, ensuring that the findings are shaped by the data rather than researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations are fundamental to any research, particularly when involving human participants, as they ensure the protection of participants' rights and dignity. In this study, the

ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were rigorously followed. Informed consent refers to the process by which participants are fully briefed about the nature, purpose, and implications of the study before agreeing to take part (Orb et al., 2001). Each participant was provided with detailed information about the research objectives, the methods of data collection, how their responses would be used, and the measures taken to protect their identities. Consent was obtained both verbally and in writing, ensuring that participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any negative consequences (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Confidentiality and anonymity were also essential to maintaining participants' privacy throughout the study. The principle of confidentiality ensures that any information provided by participants remains private, while anonymity protects the identities of individuals by preventing their responses from being linked to them personally (Patton, 2015). In this research, personal identifiers were removed from all transcripts, and pseudonyms or participant codes were used in place of real names to protect the identities of the participants. All collected data were stored in password-protected files, with access restricted to the research team, further safeguarding participant privacy (Flick, 2018).

Additionally, participants were treated with respect and fairness throughout the process, ensuring that they felt comfortable and valued during the interviews. The researchers prioritized a transparent approach, sharing the study's results with participants to promote mutual trust and accountability (Tracy, 2010). These ethical considerations ensured that the study adhered to both institutional guidelines and broader ethical standards, contributing to the trustworthiness and credibility of the research findings.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the methodological framework employed in the study, detailing the use of a qualitative research method and a case study design to explore AI adoption in PR practices in Ghana. Semi-structured interviews were utilized as the primary data collection method, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perceptions of PR professionals. Thematic analysis was chosen to analyze the collected data, providing a structured approach to identifying patterns and themes within the qualitative responses. Additionally, this chapter highlighted the ethical considerations that guided the research process, ensuring that participants' rights were upheld through informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful treatment. The methodological choices outlined in this chapter established a strong foundation for addressing the research questions and contributed to the study's validity and reliability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the data collected during the study, exploring the awareness, utilization, and adoption barriers of AI in PR practice. The insights are derived from interviews with ten participants, referred to using pseudonyms—P1 through P10. The use of pseudonyms ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, fostering an environment where they could express their perspectives freely without concerns about privacy. The discussion aligns the findings with the study's objectives while integrating relevant literature to critically examine patterns and perspectives emerging from the data. By synthesizing participant views, this chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of the evolving role of AI in the PR landscape.

##### **4.1.1 Professional Background and Experience in Public Relations**

The participants in this study demonstrated diverse professional backgrounds, reflecting a broad spectrum of experience levels and career trajectories within PR. Several participants, such as P1 and P6, had extensive experience spanning over a decade, during which they witnessed significant transformations in the industry. These seasoned practitioners highlighted the shift from traditional PR strategies to more data-driven and technologically integrated approaches, emphasizing the importance of adaptability in maintaining relevance. This observation aligns with Kumar et al. (2023), who identified adaptability as a critical skill in navigating the rapidly evolving communication landscape.

Mid-career professionals, such as P4 and P7, provided insights into the dual challenges of integrating emerging technologies while maintaining traditional relationship-building

practices. These participants frequently discussed their roles as a balance between creative storytelling and strategic analysis, echoing the findings of Farhi et al. (2022), who noted that PR increasingly requires a multidisciplinary skillset. Participants also shared examples of how their career paths were influenced by opportunities for professional development, with P3 emphasizing the importance of mentorship in shaping their approach to reputation management and stakeholder engagement.

Less experienced participants, such as P5 and P8, brought a fresh perspective shaped by academic training and early exposure to digital tools. These individuals often described a steep learning curve but highlighted how their foundational knowledge of new media platforms and analytics helped them navigate contemporary PR tasks. This aligns with Osei-Mensah et al. (2023), who suggested that younger professionals are often at the forefront of technology adoption, bridging gaps in digital literacy within organizations.

The findings underscore the dynamic nature of PR practice, where diverse professional backgrounds contribute to a rich exchange of skills and perspectives. While experienced practitioners emphasize traditional competencies and strategic leadership, younger professionals focus on leveraging digital tools and innovative approaches. Together, these insights reveal the complex interplay between experience, professional development, and the evolving demands of PR.

#### **4.1.2 Use of Digital Tools and Technologies in Practice**

The data demonstrated widespread adoption of digital tools and technologies in PR practice, with participants consistently highlighting their role in enhancing efficiency, precision, and audience engagement. Media monitoring platforms, sentiment analysis tools, and social media management software emerged as essential components of daily operations. P9 described the reliance on tools like Meltwater and Talkwalker for tracking media mentions and gauging

audience sentiment, emphasizing that such technologies provided actionable insights that informed strategic decision-making. This reflected Buhmann and White's (2022) assertion that digital technologies empower practitioners to manage intricate communication landscapes with enhanced flexibility.

The data also noted the transformative impact of automation on traditional workflows. P4 explained that automated reporting tools had significantly reduced the time spent on repetitive tasks, enabling more focus on strategic activities. However, disparities in digital tool adoption were evident, with some participants, such as P5, relying on basic applications due to resource constraints or limited training. This reflected broader challenges identified in the literature, where access to advanced technologies often depends on organizational investment and professional development opportunities (Campbell et al., 2020).

The findings highlighted that digital tools have become indispensable in PR, reshaping how professionals interact with audiences, measure outcomes, and plan campaigns. Despite these advancements, the data also revealed ongoing challenges in ensuring equitable access to technology and enhancing practitioners' proficiency in leveraging these tools effectively.

## **4.2 RQ1: What is the current level of awareness and understanding of AI technologies among PR practitioners?**

### **4.2.1 Understanding of AI and Its Relevance to Public Relations**

The findings demonstrated a shared foundational understanding of AI among participants, with the perspectives reflecting both commonality and depth in their interpretations of its core attributes and relevance to PR. AI was described broadly as technology capable of simulating human cognitive abilities, encompassing functions such as decision-making, data processing, and predictive analytics. Several participants articulated these concepts with striking clarity. For instance, P4 emphasized, "AI means technology that mimics human reasoning. It involves

tasks like language translation and predictive analytics. It has become vital in modern problem-solving.” This description was consistent with P3’s explanation that AI involves “the simulation of human cognitive abilities by machines,” enabling rapid analysis of extensive data to inform decisions in real-time. These shared views reinforced an awareness of AI’s central features and highlighted its capacity to augment complex analytical processes in PR.

Although the data indicated strong agreement on AI’s foundational characteristics, differences emerged in the extent of participants’ perceptions of its applicability. P8 highlighted AI’s role in predicting trends and automating responses, framing it as a tool essential for engaging with evolving communication demands. This interpretation mirrored findings in the literature, such as James (2024), who noted that AI allows for the customization of communication strategies to meet the specific preferences of diverse audience segments. By contrast, P10 described AI as “focused on enabling machines to think like humans,” associating it with innovation but less explicitly connecting it to practical PR scenarios. This narrower perspective reflected a partial understanding of its broader strategic potential, suggesting that awareness among practitioners may still vary in depth.

The emphasis on data-driven insights as a hallmark of AI’s relevance echoed academic perspectives, particularly Kumar et al. (2023), who argued that AI-driven analytics have transformed PR by enabling practitioners to track media trends and audience sentiment with unprecedented precision. Participants such as P6 and P9 further underscored this point by linking AI’s predictive capabilities to improved decision-making. P9 described AI as the “use of technology to solve problems efficiently,” with applications in automating repetitive tasks and adapting to dynamic conditions. This echoes the findings of Panda et al. (2019), who highlighted AI’s role in enhancing operational efficiency in campaign management.

Some participants, however, framed AI's relevance within ethical and cultural parameters, albeit implicitly. P5 described AI as transformative across industries, suggesting its far-reaching implications for shaping professional practices, yet stopped short of discussing potential challenges such as data ethics or biases. This omission underscored a gap in the broader awareness of AI's socio-cultural impacts, as documented by scholars like Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who emphasized the ethical considerations integral to the responsible integration of AI technologies.

The Technological Determinism theory best encapsulated these findings, as participants largely characterized AI as a driving force reshaping PR practices. The deterministic view, as articulated by McLuhan (1964), posits that technology's development fundamentally alters societal and professional structures. This perspective was reflected in participants' perceptions of AI as a transformative tool, albeit with varying degrees of specificity in its application to PR. P2 underscored that "AI involves using advanced systems to process data, learn patterns, and make decisions. These technologies enhance efficiency. I think of chatbots and data analytics tools as common applications." This reinforced the notion that AI's relevance to PR stems primarily from its capacity to enable efficiency and innovation in communication strategies, aligning with contemporary academic discussions of its potential.

#### **4.2.2 Integration of AI Technologies in Public Relations Practice**

The integration of AI technologies into PR practices emerged as a multifaceted topic, reflecting both widespread adoption of specific tools and differing approaches to their implementation. The field data highlighted AI's integration as an enabler of efficiency and strategic precision, with tools such as sentiment analysis platforms, media monitoring systems, and automated reporting frequently cited. P6 noted that:

AI has transformed PR in multiple ways. It enables data-driven decision-making through tools that monitor and analyse social media

trends. Automated reporting saves time and improves accuracy. Chatbots, another AI application, enhance customer service by responding instantly to queries. This has elevated the quality of engagement with stakeholders.

This perspective resonated strongly with observations by Campbell et al. (2020), who highlighted AI's capacity to streamline workflows while enhancing the accuracy of campaign evaluations. Notably, participants articulated varying degrees of reliance on AI tools. For example, P1 emphasized that "AI technologies streamline repetitive tasks such as media monitoring and reporting. For example, AI tools can analyse large volumes of news coverage to provide insights into public perception. These insights help craft better communication strategies." This detailed account highlighted the strategic value of AI integration, reflecting findings in the literature by Buhmann and White (2022), who argued that AI-driven tools enhance PR by automating routine tasks, thereby freeing practitioners to focus on higher-level decision-making.

Conversely, some participants acknowledged challenges in integrating AI into their practices. P7 mentioned the need for a balance between technological and creative elements, stating, "Professionals must now blend creativity with technical expertise to succeed." This sentiment echoed the observations of Zerfass et al. (2020), who highlighted gaps in AI literacy and the need for continuous skill enhancement to optimize technology usage. P5 and P8 similarly identified limitations, such as difficulty navigating advanced features of certain tools or insufficient organizational resources to support AI adoption comprehensively.

Despite these challenges, the findings underscored a shared recognition of AI's transformative impact on PR practices. P9 elaborated on this by explaining how AI facilitates real-time stakeholder engagement through predictive analytics and automated responses. This description draws upon the theoretical foundation of Diffusion of Innovations, as proposed by Rogers (2003), which asserts that the adoption of innovations progresses over time, influenced

by perceived advantages, compatibility, and ease of use. The data reflected this diffusion, with early adopters leveraging AI for strategic gains while others navigated barriers to integration.

P8 illuminated that “Public relations benefits from AI through automated sentiment tracking and data analysis. AI tools identify what the audience cares about. This helps in tailoring communication strategies to their needs.” This assertion captured the essence of AI’s contribution to data-informed strategy development, aligning with the academic consensus that tools such as predictive analytics and sentiment analysis enable more targeted and responsive campaigns.

The findings highlighted a dynamic interplay between opportunities and constraints in AI integration, emphasizing the importance of both technological capability and human agency. The role of organizational support, as noted by participants, reflected the need for infrastructural investments and capacity-building initiatives to sustain AI’s transformative potential. These observations supported scholarly calls, such as those by Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), for strategic frameworks tailored to local contexts to optimize AI adoption in PR practices.

#### **4.2.3 Essential AI Tools Transforming Public Relations**

The findings revealed a widespread recognition of AI tools as indispensable assets in modern PR practices, with participants consistently identifying several applications that enhance efficiency and strategic decision-making. Media monitoring platforms emerged as a pivotal technology, frequently referenced for their role in tracking brand mentions and analyzing media coverage. P1 articulated this by noting, “Media monitoring tools like Meltwater help track brand mentions across various platforms in real-time. Sentiment analysis tools such as Talkwalker measure audience perceptions and generate insights for crafting better communication strategies.” This assertion was supported by P6, who identified media

monitoring tools as pivotal for assessing audience sentiment and measuring campaign outcomes.

The emphasis on sentiment analysis tools reflected a broader consensus in the data about their transformative impact. The insights highlighted these platforms as essential for decoding public sentiment, facilitating real-time adjustments to communication strategies. P8 described these tools as providing critical insights into “what the audience cares about,” facilitating the tailoring of messages to resonate with diverse demographics. This view reflected scholarly arguments by Kaplan and Haenlein (2020), who posited that sentiment analysis enables PR professionals to engage dynamically with audience feedback, thereby strengthening message relevance.

The data also highlighted the significance of predictive analytics tools. These technologies, as described by P9, allowed for “forecasting campaign success and optimizing strategies,” effectively reducing uncertainty in decision-making processes. This perspective was consistent with James (2024), who underscored predictive analytics as a cornerstone of AI’s strategic utility in PR, enabling data-driven planning and risk management. However, not all participants expressed equal familiarity with such advanced tools, with P5 emphasizing the reliance on simpler applications like automated content generators. This variation suggested differing levels of expertise and access among practitioners, a theme that echoed Osei-Mensah et al.’s (2023) observations about the uneven adoption of AI technologies within developing contexts.

P6 added that “Chatbots ensure fast responses to stakeholder queries. Predictive tools guide the planning of campaigns by forecasting potential outcomes. These technologies improve engagement and decision-making, helping practitioners maintain responsiveness in a rapidly changing media environment.” The data also reflected a growing reliance on AI-driven tools for stakeholder engagement, with chatbots frequently cited as transformative. P2 and P7

highlighted their ability to provide immediate, personalized responses, significantly enhancing customer interactions. These perspectives aligned with Campbell et al. (2020), who identified chatbots as a critical interface between organizations and audiences, particularly in high-frequency engagement scenarios.

The findings underscored the applicability of Diffusion of Innovations theory in explaining the adoption patterns of these tools. Early adopters actively utilized advanced technologies such as predictive analytics, while others leveraged foundational tools like sentiment analysis and chatbots. This theoretical lens captured the varying adoption rates and the role of perceived benefits in shaping practitioners' engagement with AI.

#### **4.2.4 Pathways to Acquiring AI Skills**

The data revealed diverse pathways through which participants acquired their AI skills, reflecting both individual initiative and institutional support. A recurring theme was the role of self-directed learning, with participants frequently referencing online courses and tutorials as critical resources. P3 emphasized that:

Learning AI skills was a gradual process for me. I started by exploring free tutorials online. Later, I joined a training programme organized by my organization. Over time, regular use of AI tools at work helped me refine my expertise.

This statement highlighted a blended approach that combined independent exploration with formal training, echoing Bourne's (2019) assertion that skill acquisition in technology requires both personal agency and structured learning environments.

Workplace training was another prominent pathway, particularly for participants like P4, who stated, "I acquired AI skills through workplace training sessions. These sessions introduced AI tools used in PR. Experimenting with these tools has been crucial for my learning." This institutional support reflected findings in the literature by Kumar et al. (2023), which emphasized the importance of organizational investment in capacity building to foster AI

adoption. However, disparities in the availability of such resources were evident, as P5 noted, “My AI skills came from trial and error. I explored tools on my own and learned by using them.” This perspective underscored the challenges faced by practitioners in resource-constrained settings, aligning with Anani-Bossman’s (2023) observations about the uneven accessibility of training programs in developing countries.

P2 further intimated that:

My journey in acquiring AI skills started with self-initiative. I took online courses focused on AI and its use in communication. Exploring free resources, such as webinars, helped a lot. At work, I shadowed colleagues who used AI tools, which provided practical exposure.

This description emphasized the multidimensional nature of learning, blending digital resources with mentorship and practical experience. It reflected the findings of Ramachandran et al. (2024), who highlighted peer learning as a critical enabler of technology adoption.

The findings also underscored the significance of hands-on experience in building proficiency. P1 described experimenting with tools like sentiment analysis software to “enhance skills further.” This active engagement echoed McLuhan’s (1964) concept of the “extension of human faculties,” wherein technology becomes an integral component of professional competence. Similarly, P9 linked proficiency to iterative learning, stating, “Additional reading and experimentation allowed me to build confidence.”

The applicability of Diffusion of Innovations theory was evident in these findings, as participants’ pathways to skill acquisition reflected varying stages of adoption. Innovators and early adopters leveraged diverse resources, while others relied on foundational training and workplace exposure. The theory’s emphasis on social systems and individual decision-making offered a robust framework for interpreting these dynamics.

For P8, they underscore that their “AI skills developed from formal training and practice. The company arranged workshops for us to learn specific tools. These workshops focused on real-

world applications.” This quote illustrated the pivotal role of structured programs in bridging knowledge gaps and fostering practical expertise. It aligned with scholarly calls, such as those by Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), for enhanced organizational efforts to democratize access to AI training. The findings suggested a critical need for policy and educational frameworks to address disparities in AI literacy. By investing in accessible training and mentorship programs, organizations could ensure that practitioners at all levels are equipped to navigate the evolving technological landscape.

#### **4.2.5 Proficiency and Adoption Levels of AI Skills**

The findings indicated a wide range of proficiency and adoption levels in using AI skills among participants, reflecting the varying experiences and opportunities available to them. Several participants demonstrated advanced levels of expertise, effectively integrating AI tools into their workflows. P1 described their proficiency as “quite advanced,” noting the regular use of multiple AI tools to enhance efficiency. This perspective reflected broader discussions in the literature, such as Kumar et al. (2023), who highlighted that advanced AI adopters often report significant gains in strategic outcomes due to their deeper understanding of these technologies.

P1 affirmed that:

My AI adoption and usage skills are quite advanced. I use multiple AI tools in my daily PR tasks, including media monitoring and sentiment analysis platforms. These technologies help me improve efficiency and create targeted campaigns. While there is always more to learn, I feel well-equipped to leverage AI in PR.

Similarly, P9 emphasized their comfort with advanced predictive analytics tools, describing them as integral to their approach in optimizing campaign strategies and improving decision-making. This was consistent with Farhi et al. (2022), who argued that AI tools such as predictive analytics enable a forward-looking approach to PR, aligning strategies with anticipated audience behaviors. However, participants like P5 and P8 presented a contrasting picture, describing their AI adoption as foundational or developing. P5 acknowledged reliance

on basic tools such as automated reporting and sentiment analysis but expressed a willingness to expand their skillset. This finding underscored the challenges associated with resource constraints and the lack of formal training, a theme echoed by Buhmann and White (2022), who noted that access to advanced tools and training is often uneven in developing contexts.

P5 noted that:

My AI adoption is at a foundational level, but I am actively building my skills. I use basic tools like automated reporting software and simple sentiment analysis platforms. Although my experience is limited, I have seen the potential of AI to transform PR practices.

The role of workplace training also emerged as significant in shaping proficiency levels. P4 attributed their skills to “workplace training sessions,” which introduced AI tools specific to PR. These sessions provided structured opportunities for learning, reflecting the emphasis in the literature on organizational support as critical for enhancing AI literacy (Nutsugah & Senanu, 2024).

The data frequently underscored the importance of self-directed learning in bridging knowledge gaps. P3 and P2 described their reliance on online tutorials, free webinars, and practical experimentation as key to developing their skills. P2 elaborated:

My journey in acquiring AI skills started with self-initiative. I took online courses focused on AI and its use in communication. Exploring free resources, such as webinars, helped a lot. At work, I shadowed colleagues who used AI tools, which provided practical exposure.

These findings demonstrated a blend of formal and informal learning pathways, illustrating how practitioners adapted to their contexts to develop proficiency. Diffusion of Innovations theory aptly contextualized these observations, as participants exhibited varying stages of adoption, influenced by access, perceived utility, and individual initiative. P6 added that “I gained AI skills through self-study and training programmes. I read extensively on AI applications in PR. This theoretical foundation helped me use AI tools effectively.” The

discussion highlighted the need for more accessible and comprehensive training initiatives to bridge gaps in proficiency and ensure equitable adoption of AI technologies across the field.

#### **4.3 RQ2: How do practitioners utilize AI in their daily activities?**

##### **4.3.1 Frequently Used AI Tools in Public Relations**

The findings showcased a diverse array of AI tools regularly utilized by participants, with media monitoring platforms consistently identified as indispensable for tracking brand mentions and public sentiment. Tools like Meltwater and Talkwalker were frequently referenced as enabling real-time data collection and analysis. P6 emphasized the utility of these tools:

Meltwater is my most frequently used AI tool for media monitoring. It provides real-time updates on brand mentions and trending topics. I also use chatbots to manage customer inquiries efficiently. Predictive analytics tools, like HubSpot, help me forecast campaign performance. These technologies have significantly improved my efficiency and effectiveness.

This perspective echoed scholarly arguments by Kaplan and Haenlein (2020), who underscored the critical role of AI in facilitating real-time monitoring and trend analysis, thereby enhancing responsiveness in PR.

Sentiment analysis platforms also emerged as a key theme, with participants emphasizing their role in decoding audience emotions and guiding messaging strategies. P8 noted the effectiveness of tools like Lexalytics, stating:

For PR tasks, I frequently use sentiment analysis tools like Lexalytics. They provide insights into audience emotions regarding campaigns. I also use chatbots for customer service queries. For media tracking, tools like Mention are quite helpful. These platforms are integral to my work.

The use of chatbots for stakeholder engagement was another recurring theme. Participants described these tools as essential for providing immediate and personalized responses to inquiries, with P7 highlighting their role in enhancing audience interaction. This resonates with

the findings of Campbell et al. (2020), who portrayed chatbots as transformative tools in scenarios involving high-frequency engagement. P7 elaborated noting that:

I rely heavily on AI-powered tools like BuzzSumo for content research. It helps identify trending topics and potential influencers. Social media analytics tools, like Sprout Social, are also part of my routine. They help measure audience engagement and assess campaign performance. These tools keep me organized and informed.

The data also indicated experimentation with newer AI tools, such as automated content generators and predictive analytics platforms. P9 highlighted the role of Salesforce in forecasting campaign success and optimizing strategies, demonstrating the broad applicability of AI in both operational and strategic functions.

The theoretical framework of Diffusion of Innovations effectively contextualized the findings, illustrating how practitioners adopted a range of tools based on perceived utility, organizational context, and individual expertise. Early adopters demonstrated confidence in advanced platforms, while others gravitated toward foundational tools with more straightforward applications. This variability reflected the dynamic landscape of AI adoption in PR practices.

Further, P4 espoused that:

Social media monitoring tools like Hootsuite are among the AI technologies I use most often. They help track conversations and engagement metrics efficiently. I also rely on tools like Google Analytics for understanding audience behavior. Sentiment analysis software, such as MonkeyLearn, is another key tool in my PR toolkit.

The data underscored the strategic value of AI tools in modern PR, emphasizing their capacity to enhance efficiency, provide actionable insights, and foster meaningful audience engagement. Scholarly calls for enhanced accessibility and training initiatives, such as those by Anani-Bossman (2023), aligned with the findings, highlighting the need to ensure equitable access to these transformative technologies.

### **4.3.2 AI's Impact on Traditional Public Relations Roles and Tasks**

The findings indicated that AI has substantially altered traditional roles and tasks within PR, leading to increased efficiency and a shift in practitioners' focus from operational to strategic responsibilities. The findings consistently emphasized how AI tools have automated repetitive tasks, such as media monitoring and report generation, allowing practitioners to focus on more creative and analytical activities.

P1 emphasized that AI had streamlined traditional activities, stating, "It has automated repetitive activities like media monitoring and report generation, allowing us to focus on more strategic responsibilities. For instance, tools like sentiment analysis software handle audience feedback more quickly than manual methods." This observation reflected scholarly assertions by Kumar et al. (2023), who noted that AI enhances productivity by taking over time-intensive tasks, thereby elevating the role of PR professionals to strategic decision-makers.

The findings also underscored AI's ability to facilitate real-time responses to communication challenges. P3 observed, "AI tools now track and analyse conversations across digital platforms in real time. This means we can respond faster and with greater precision." This capability mirrored findings by Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), who argued that real-time analytics enabled by AI had redefined the agility required in modern PR, positioning practitioners as proactive rather than reactive actors in their communication strategies.

P7 stated as well that:

AI has changed how PR professionals perform their duties. Traditional media monitoring has been replaced with real-time analytics platforms. Campaign planning has become more data-driven, thanks to predictive tools. Professionals must now blend creativity with technical expertise to succeed.

The data also revealed a shift in skill requirements, with participants noting the increasing demand for technical expertise to manage AI tools effectively. P2 remarked, "PR professionals

now need to be data-savvy to use these technologies effectively. This has elevated the field but also introduced challenges in terms of skill acquisition.” This perspective resonated with the challenges identified by Zerfass et al. (2020), who highlighted that while AI adoption enhances strategic capacities, it necessitates continuous upskilling to bridge knowledge gaps.

However, the data also expressed concerns about potential trade-offs associated with AI integration. P4 noted that while AI enhanced efficiency, it diminished the emphasis on traditional skills such as manual research and interpersonal engagement. This observation reflected discussions by Bourne (2019), who critiqued the increasing reliance on automation for eroding the personal touch historically central to PR. P6 added that “The integration of AI has added a layer of sophistication to PR strategies. However, adapting to these changes requires ongoing learning and skill enhancement.”

These findings aligned with Technological Determinism theory, as the integration of AI was portrayed as a transformative force reshaping professional roles and tasks. This perspective emphasized how technology drives structural changes within industries, underscoring the necessity for practitioners to adapt to these shifts through continuous learning and innovation.

#### **4.3.3 Assessing the Effectiveness of AI Tools in Public Relations Outcomes**

The findings demonstrated a shared recognition of the effectiveness of AI tools in enhancing PR outcomes, with participants consistently citing improvements in operational efficiency, audience engagement, and campaign success. However, variations emerged in how participants evaluated these benefits and their reliance on specific metrics to measure success.

The findings frequently highlighted the time-saving benefits of AI tools. P1 described their evaluation process as focusing on “the time saved in tasks like media monitoring before and after implementing AI.” This practical assessment echoed the findings of Campbell et al. (2020), who argued that AI tools reduce operational burdens, enabling professionals to dedicate

more time to strategy and creative planning. Similarly, P6 highlighted improvements in workflow efficiency, noting, “Evaluating AI tools involves comparing expected outcomes with actual results, such as faster report generation and increased campaign success rates.”

Additionally, P2 asserted that:

To assess the effectiveness of AI tools, I focus on measurable outcomes like audience reach and sentiment changes. For example, I use analytics to determine if AI tools are improving the precision of targeting in campaigns.

The findings also underscored the role of audience engagement as a critical metric for assessing AI’s impact. P8 described how sentiment analysis tools provided deep insights into audience reactions, enabling real-time adjustments to campaigns. This perspective was consistent with Kaplan and Haenlein’s (2020) observations that AI tools facilitate dynamic audience interaction, enhancing the resonance of communication strategies.

Despite these benefits, some participants expressed concerns about over-reliance on AI-generated data. P5 noted, “Improved audience targeting is another metric I look at. If these tools help me achieve better outcomes with less effort, I consider them effective.” However, they also cautioned that the tools’ effectiveness depended on human oversight to interpret the data meaningfully. This concern echoed discussions in the literature by Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of balancing automation with human judgment to ensure the reliability of insights derived from AI. P9 dovetailed in that:

Evaluating AI tools is a multi-step process. First, I look at quantitative metrics, such as increased engagement or improved sentiment analysis accuracy. Second, I consider operational factors like time saved on repetitive tasks. Third, I seek feedback from stakeholders to gauge whether the tools improve communication effectiveness.

The findings also underscored the importance of continuous feedback and iterative learning in refining AI tool usage. P3 described regularly reviewing reports generated by AI tools to ensure

their accuracy and relevance, emphasizing that ongoing assessments were critical to sustaining their effectiveness.

The findings reflected the applicability of Diffusion of Innovations theory, as participants demonstrated varying degrees of sophistication in evaluating AI tools. Early adopters relied on advanced metrics such as predictive analytics outcomes, while others focused on foundational indicators like operational efficiency. This dynamic illustrated the iterative nature of technology adoption and the evolving strategies employed to measure its effectiveness. In another breath, P4 asserted that:

The effectiveness of AI tools is evaluated through their impact on both efficiency and outcomes. I examine how much time these tools save in tasks like media tracking and sentiment analysis. Another method is analyzing audience feedback to gauge the success of AI-guided strategies.

These insights highlighted the strategic value of AI in PR, underscoring its ability to enhance campaign outcomes while necessitating a balance between technological reliance and human oversight. The findings also supported scholarly calls for integrating both qualitative and quantitative evaluation frameworks to ensure a holistic assessment of AI tools' impact on communication strategies.

#### **4.3.4 Opportunities for Further Enhancement Using AI**

The findings underscored several opportunities for expanding the utility of AI in PR, with participants highlighting areas such as personalized communication, predictive crisis management, and multilingual capabilities as avenues for further development. The findings frequently highlighted AI's untapped potential in tailoring communication strategies to individual audience preferences. P1 described this as an essential area for growth, noting:

AI has the potential to improve personalisation in PR campaigns. It can analyse audience data more deeply to create tailored messages. Crisis communication is another area that can benefit significantly. AI tools could predict potential crises and suggest strategies to address them

proactively. Additionally, content generation could be enhanced further, making it faster and more accurate.

This observation is consistent with Kumar et al. (2023), who identified audience segmentation and message personalization as key areas where AI technologies can enhance engagement and effectiveness in communication. Participants also saw potential for AI to bolster crisis communication strategies. P6 noted that predictive analytics could identify emerging risks, enabling organizations to address issues before they escalate. This perspective corresponds with Brobbey et al. (2021), who asserted that AI-driven risk assessments bolster organizational preparedness, facilitating proactive approaches for PR practitioners during crises.

Moreover, the use of AI for multilingual communication was identified as a promising development. P8 elaborated:

The use of AI could be extended to enhance multilingual communication. Real-time translation tools could ensure that messages reach a broader audience accurately. Budget planning for campaigns could also be improved with AI providing predictive insights on resource allocation. Furthermore, AI could refine A/B testing by analysing results faster and more thoroughly.

This reflected scholarly arguments by Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), who emphasized the importance of localized AI applications to bridge language barriers and improve accessibility in diverse markets. Additionally, participants highlighted AI's role in ethical monitoring and ensuring alignment with societal values. P9 observed:

AI could significantly improve relationship management. Predictive tools could identify stakeholders who need more engagement and suggest personalised approaches. Social media strategy could also benefit from more advanced AI, offering real-time adjustments to optimise performance. In addition, AI could improve ethics monitoring, ensuring campaigns align with societal values.

This aligns with Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who underscored the need for AI tools to integrate ethical frameworks to prevent misuse and enhance trust in PR practices. The findings reflected the potential of Diffusion of Innovations theory to contextualize these opportunities. As AI technologies become more advanced and accessible, their adoption is likely to accelerate,

driven by their capacity to address critical gaps in personalization, crisis management, and ethical oversight.

#### **4.4 RQ3: What are the perceived barriers and facilitators to AI adoption in public relations practices?**

##### **4.4.1 Challenges in Adopting AI Technologies in Public Relations**

Participants identified a range of challenges hindering the adoption of AI in PR, including limited access to training, resource constraints, and ethical concerns. These obstacles reflected both structural and contextual barriers, highlighting the complexity of integrating AI into professional workflows. P4 described a recurring issue with organizational support:

Can you describe some of the barriers you or your organization have encountered in adopting AI technologies? Explore more here. In your experience, what kind of support (e.g., training, resources, infrastructure) is necessary to integrate AI into PR practices successfully? What is the future of AI in PR practice in Ghana?

This statement highlighted the need for robust institutional frameworks to support AI adoption, aligning with Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), who emphasized the importance of organizational investment in infrastructure and training to overcome adoption challenges. Resource constraints emerged as another significant barrier. P2 remarked:

The adoption of AI requires significant investment in terms of both financial and human resources. Many organizations lack the infrastructure or technical expertise to effectively integrate these tools into their workflows. This creates a gap between potential and actual utilization.

This observation mirrored findings by Osei-Mensah et al. (2023), who noted that limited resources in developing contexts often hinder the widespread adoption of advanced technologies like AI. Participants also expressed concerns about the ethical implications of AI usage. P6 elaborated on this point, stating:

The ethical considerations of AI adoption in PR cannot be overlooked. Issues such as data privacy, the authenticity of AI-generated content,

and the potential for manipulation pose challenges that require careful consideration. It is essential to balance innovation with ethical responsibility to maintain trust.

This perspective aligned with Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of ethical oversight in ensuring the responsible use of AI technologies, particularly in fields like PR where trust is paramount.

Additionally, gaps in AI literacy were identified as a critical challenge. P5 noted the difficulty of acquiring the necessary skills to effectively use AI tools, remarking:

Many professionals lack the training and expertise to fully utilize AI's capabilities. This gap not only limits their ability to adopt these technologies but also creates reliance on outdated methods. Bridging this gap requires accessible training programs and ongoing skill development.

This finding resonated with Bourne (2019), who argued that advancing AI literacy among practitioners is critical for optimizing its integration into professional practices. The findings reflected the applicability of Technological Determinism theory, as the challenges highlighted structural dependencies and the influence of technological evolution on professional practices. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive approach that includes organizational investment, skill development, and ethical oversight to ensure sustainable AI adoption in PR.

#### **4.4.2 Support Required for Successful AI Integration in Practice**

The findings consistently highlighted the critical need for organizational and systemic support to successfully integrate AI into PR practices. Participants emphasized the importance of access to training programs, technological infrastructure, and supportive policies as fundamental enablers of AI adoption. P1 explained:

For AI integration to be successful, organizations must invest in regular training programs tailored to PR professionals. These should focus on both technical skills and strategic applications. Additionally, adequate technological infrastructure, such as reliable software and hardware, is necessary to maximize AI's potential. Without these, integration remains a challenge.

This perspective aligned with the arguments of Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), who stressed the importance of organizational investments in capacity building and technological upgrades as key factors for effective AI adoption. Participants also highlighted the role of mentorship and peer learning. P6 elaborated on this, stating:

Support for AI integration should go beyond formal training. Peer learning and mentorship programs can be effective in bridging the knowledge gap. Practitioners can share their experiences and best practices, fostering a collaborative environment where skills are developed through mutual support.

This observation parallels Bourne's (2019) discussion on how community learning fosters AI literacy, especially in industries experiencing rapid technological change.

Institutional policies were frequently mentioned as essential to facilitating integration. Participants stressed the need for clear guidelines and ethical frameworks to govern the use of AI in PR. P9 remarked:

AI integration requires strong institutional policies. Organizations need clear guidelines to ensure ethical AI use and avoid risks like data breaches or misinformation. Additionally, providing resources, such as grants or subsidized access to tools, could encourage smaller firms to adopt AI technologies.

This aligned with the recommendations of Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who emphasized the dual necessity of ethical oversight and resource allocation to foster sustainable AI adoption.

Additionally, the findings reflected the importance of industry-wide collaboration to address systemic barriers. P8 noted:

Collaborative efforts across the PR industry could drive AI adoption. Shared platforms for learning, collective investment in research, and joint initiatives for developing affordable tools would ensure that AI benefits are accessible to all practitioners, not just large organizations.

These insights underscore the need for a holistic approach to support, combining organizational initiatives with broader industry efforts. The Diffusion of Innovations theory contextualized

these findings, emphasizing that systemic support accelerates the adoption process by reducing barriers and increasing the perceived utility of new technologies.

#### **4.4.3 Prospects for AI in the Future of Public Relations Practice**

The findings revealed optimism regarding the future role of AI in PR, with participants envisioning its continued evolution and integration into various aspects of professional practice. AI was seen as having the potential to revolutionize communication strategies, stakeholder engagement, and campaign management. P3 remarked:

AI holds immense promise for the future of PR. Predictive analytics will likely become more advanced, enabling practitioners to anticipate audience behavior with greater accuracy. Real-time translation tools will enhance global communication, while AI-generated content will achieve higher quality and personalisation. These advancements will redefine how PR professionals approach their work.

This perspective is consistent with Kumar et al. (2023), who argued that the increasing sophistication of AI technologies will enhance the precision and reach of PR campaigns.

Participants frequently highlighted AI's potential to deepen audience insights, enabling more tailored and impactful communication strategies. P7 noted:

The future of AI in PR lies in its ability to provide deeper insights into audience behavior. With advancements in data analytics, PR professionals will have a more comprehensive understanding of what drives audience engagement. This will make campaigns more effective and targeted.

This aligns with Kaplan and Haenlein's (2020) assertion that AI's ability to analyze large datasets will continue to drive innovation in communication strategies, allowing practitioners to anticipate trends and adapt in real time. The role of AI in ethical oversight was also emphasized, with participants suggesting that future developments could address current concerns. P5 explained:

AI could be developed to include ethical monitoring systems that automatically flag potentially harmful or misleading content. This would ensure campaigns adhere to ethical standards, building trust with

stakeholders. Such tools could become essential for maintaining credibility in an increasingly digital world.

This observation echoed the discussions of Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who highlighted the importance of embedding ethical frameworks into AI technologies to foster responsible communication practices. Participants also saw potential in AI-driven collaboration tools, which could streamline project management and enhance team productivity. P2 commented:

Future AI tools will likely support better collaboration among PR teams. Automated task management and integrated platforms for sharing insights could reduce inefficiencies and improve coordination. This will make PR work more streamlined and cohesive, especially in large organizations.

This perspective is reflected in Ramachandran et al. (2022), who noted that AI-driven collaborative platforms are emerging as critical tools for enhancing operational efficiency in communication-related fields. The findings reflected a strong alignment with Technological Determinism theory, as participants envisioned AI as a transformative force shaping the trajectory of PR. This theoretical lens captured the optimism and forward-looking perspectives expressed in the data, highlighting the integral role of technological advancements in defining the future of the field.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter examined the data obtained from interviews, providing a detailed discussion of participants' views on AI in PR. The findings highlighted varying levels of awareness, usage patterns, and challenges, reflecting differences in professional experience, access to resources, and organizational support. Participants identified tools like media monitoring platforms and sentiment analysis software as transformative for efficiency and strategic engagement. However, resource constraints, gaps in technical expertise, and ethical concerns emerged as significant barriers to adoption. These findings were contextualized within existing literature and theoretical frameworks, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between technology, practice, and professional development.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the key findings of the study, presenting a synthesis of insights into AI adoption within PR. It offers a summary of the study's findings, drawing connections to the research objectives and highlighting the implications for both theory and practice. The conclusion contextualizes these findings, emphasizing their significance within the Ghanaian PR landscape. Recommendations are provided to address the challenges identified, suggesting actionable pathways for practitioners, organizations, and policymakers to optimize the integration and utility of AI in communication strategies. Together, these components provide a clear roadmap for advancing AI adoption in PR.

#### 5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study investigates the role of AI in PR practice, focusing on practitioners' awareness, application, and challenges associated with AI adoption. The objectives are threefold: to explore the level of awareness and understanding of AI technologies among PR practitioners, to examine how these technologies are utilized in professional activities, and to identify the barriers and enablers influencing AI adoption within the PR domain.

The findings reveal that awareness of AI technologies among practitioners varies. Many participants demonstrate a foundational understanding of AI as a tool for simulating human cognitive abilities and recognize its relevance in transforming communication strategies. This aligns with James (2024), who argues that AI technologies enable PR professionals to customize communication strategies and improve audience targeting. However, while some participants exhibit advanced comprehension of AI's strategic applications, others hold a more

basic understanding limited to operational functionalities. This disparity echoes Osei-Mensah et al. (2023), who highlight varying levels of AI literacy as a key challenge in technology adoption within developing economies.

Practitioners report that AI tools significantly streamline workflows, with media monitoring platforms, sentiment analysis tools, and chatbots emerging as commonly used technologies. For instance, Campbell et al. (2020) emphasize the transformative role of media monitoring platforms in tracking brand mentions and providing real-time audience sentiment analysis. Participants confirm similar benefits, noting that these tools automate repetitive tasks, optimize stakeholder engagement, and provide actionable insights. While some early adopters integrate advanced functionalities, such as predictive analytics for campaign optimization (James, 2024), others primarily use foundational applications. This mirrors findings by Buhmann and White (2022), who observe varying levels of AI adoption across organizations due to skill gaps and resource limitations.

Barriers to AI adoption emerge as critical challenges. The data echoed resource constraints, inadequate training opportunities, and limited AI literacy as significant impediments. These findings resonate with Ramachandran et al. (2024), who argue that gaps in technological infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives hinder the adoption of advanced tools. Ethical concerns, including data privacy and the authenticity of AI-generated content, also surface as recurring themes, aligning with Oladoyinbo et al. (2024), who underscore the need for clear ethical guidelines in AI-driven communication.

Conversely, the study identifies several enablers of AI adoption. Participants emphasize the role of structured training programs, workplace mentorship, and accessible online resources in equipping practitioners with necessary skills. Kumar et al. (2023) similarly advocate for organizational investments in capacity building to enhance AI adoption. Institutional policies

promoting ethical use and subsidized access to AI tools are also viewed as essential. These findings align with Nutsugah and Senanu (2024), who argue that fostering equitable access to AI technologies requires strategic frameworks tailored to local contexts.

The study underscores AI's transformative impact on PR while highlighting the uneven adoption of its tools and practices. It demonstrates that while practitioners recognize AI's potential to enhance communication strategies and operational efficiency, addressing critical barriers through investment, training, and ethical oversight remains essential. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of AI's current and prospective roles in PR, providing valuable insights for practitioners, organizations, and policymakers.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The adoption of AI in PR practice represents a transformative shift, redefining how communication strategies are designed and implemented. By automating routine tasks such as media monitoring, sentiment analysis, and content creation, AI enhances efficiency and enables data-driven decision-making. Buhmann and White (2022) observe that AI allows PR professionals to focus on strategic roles, such as relationship building and crisis management, by reducing time spent on repetitive tasks. This means PR plays a critical role in aligning AI capabilities with organizational objectives, ensuring ethical usage, and fostering trust among stakeholders. James (2024) highlights how predictive analytics and real-time engagement tools amplify PR's ability to adapt to dynamic communication environments, particularly in multinational corporations. The study affirms this by illustrating how AI tools enable real-time audience segmentation, predictive campaign adjustments, and improved responsiveness to global communication challenges.

The implications of this study extend to both theoretical understanding and practical application. It highlights AI's transformative role in strengthening strategic decision-making

and streamlining operations. Nutsugah and Senanu (2024) emphasize the importance of addressing barriers such as skill gaps, resource constraints, and ethical concerns through structured capacity-building initiatives. This research aligns with their argument, providing a framework for practitioners to navigate challenges and maximize AI's potential.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that AI tools contribute significantly to improving stakeholder engagement and crisis management. For instance, predictive analytics enable PR professionals to anticipate public reactions and plan effective responses proactively, a benefit underscored by Kumar et al. (2023). Chatbots and automated reporting systems, as highlighted by Campbell et al. (2020), facilitate consistent communication with stakeholders while saving time on routine tasks. This dual functionality of AI—enhancing engagement and improving operational efficiency—positions it as an indispensable tool for modern PR practices.

The Ghanaian context underscores the importance of this study. As digital transformation continues to reshape industries, understanding AI's potential within PR becomes essential for navigating the unique cultural and infrastructural challenges present in the region. This study illuminates how local practitioners can leverage AI to enhance communication while respecting cultural dynamics. Anani-Bossman (2023) stresses the importance of contextualized strategies in developing economies, and this research echoes that sentiment by showcasing practical pathways for AI integration in Ghana's PR industry.

Moreover, the study highlights the broader implications of AI adoption for emerging markets. With appropriate investments in training, infrastructure, and ethical guidelines, PR professionals in Ghana can harness AI to compete effectively on regional and global stages. This research contributes to advancing PR practices by offering actionable recommendations for practitioners, organizations, and policymakers. By addressing critical barriers and fostering

a culture of innovation, the PR industry can fully embrace AI's transformative potential, ensuring its continued relevance and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The findings of the study underscore the transformative potential of AI in PR while highlighting critical barriers to its adoption and utilization. To fully realize the benefits of AI technologies and address the challenges identified, a collaborative effort involving practitioners, organizations, industry bodies, and policymakers is essential. The recommendations provided are closely tied to the study's objectives and are designed to enhance awareness, optimize utilization, and address barriers to AI integration within PR.

To enhance awareness and understanding of AI technologies among practitioners, industry associations and educational institutions should implement comprehensive training programs. These initiatives should focus on the fundamentals of AI, its practical applications in PR, and ethical considerations. Training should be accessible, with a blend of in-person workshops and online modules to accommodate diverse learning preferences. Organizations should incentivize participation by offering subsidized programs or professional certification schemes.

To improve the use of AI in daily activities, organizations must prioritize investment in advanced tools and resources. Managers should allocate budgets for acquiring and maintaining AI technologies tailored to the specific needs of PR teams. Additionally, internal mentorship programs should be established to foster peer learning, enabling experienced practitioners to guide their colleagues in mastering AI tools. Industry bodies should create centralized knowledge-sharing platforms to disseminate best practices and case studies showcasing successful AI integration.

To overcome barriers and enhance facilitators to AI adoption, policymakers and regulatory bodies must establish frameworks that ensure ethical AI usage. Guidelines should address

issues such as data privacy, content authenticity, and transparency in AI-generated communication. Organizations should implement internal policies that align with these frameworks while promoting an organizational culture that values innovation and continuous learning. Practitioners must advocate for the inclusion of AI literacy in professional development programs, ensuring that both technical and strategic skills are emphasized.

### **5.5 Areas for Future Research**

Future studies should explore the intersection of AI and culturally sensitive communication practices in PR. This research should examine how AI technologies can be adapted to align with diverse cultural contexts while maintaining effectiveness and ethical standards. The role of localized AI applications in addressing challenges unique to developing economies, such as limited infrastructure and diverse linguistic needs, requires further investigation. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into the evolving impact of AI on PR, capturing changes in adoption patterns, skill requirements, and strategic outcomes over time.

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## APPENDIX

### Interview Guide Draft

- To begin, I would like to know more about your professional background.
- Can you tell me about your current role and how long you've been working in public relations?
- Also, could you share your experience with using digital tools or technologies in your work so far?

Objective 1: To explore the awareness and understanding of AI technologies among practitioners

1. What is your understanding of AI/AI technologies?
2. How do AI technologies fit into public relations practice?
3. What are some of the essential AI tools or technologies that are transforming PR practices?
4. How did you gain AI skills?
5. What is the level of your AI adoption and usage skills?

Objective 2: To examine how practitioners utilize AI in their daily activities

1. Which AI tools do you use often?
2. In your view, how has AI impacted the traditional roles and tasks of PR professionals?  
*Elaborate on your answer*
3. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of AI tools in enhancing the outcomes of your PR activities?
4. Which other areas can be improved with AI?

Objective 3: To investigate the barriers and facilitators to AI adoption in public relations practices

1. Can you describe some of the barriers you or your organization have encountered in adopting AI technologies? *Explore more here*
2. In your experience, what kind of support (e.g., training, resources, infrastructure) is necessary to integrate AI into PR practices successfully?
  3. What is the future of AI in PR practice in Ghana?